

Appl. No. 09/767,627

Amdt. dated July 5, 2005

Reply to Office Action of May 3, 2005

REMARKS

Claims 1-40 are pending. Claims 13 and 16-40 are cancelled. Claims 1-12, 14, and 15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103. Claim 1 has been amended. Support for the amendment to claim 1 is found in paragraph 0010 of the specification as originally filed as well as in Figures 1-6. Claims 1-12, 14, and 15 remain for consideration upon entry of the present Amendment. No new matter has been added.

Claims 1-6, 9-12, 14, and 15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,410,812 to Althaus (hereinafter "Althaus '812") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,359,774 to Althaus (hereinafter "Althaus '774"). The Examiner alleges that Althaus '812 discloses the invention substantially as claimed including a plastic body including leading and trailing edges, guard ribs that cover at least a portion of cutting edges of cutting blades, a center guard rib, a guard bar, a cap and a lubricating strip. The Examiner states that Althaus '812 does not show guard ribs integrally formed with the body. The Examiner does assert, however, that Althaus '774 teaches the use of guard ribs integrally formed with the body for the purpose of reducing manufacturing cost. The Examiner further alleges that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have modified the guard ribs of Althaus '812 by providing guard ribs integrally formed with the body as taught by Althaus '774 in order to reduce manufacturing cost.

Claim 1 of the present application has been amended to recite a razor blade cartridge comprising a body including a leading edge, a trailing edge, and a series of guard ribs integrally formed with the body and spaced away from opposing ends of the body; and one or more cutting blades coupled to the body and having portions encompassed by the guard ribs. Each of the cutting blades includes a cutting edge. One or more of the guard ribs extends from the body adjacent the leading edge to the body adjacent the trailing edge such that the one or more guard ribs is continuous with the body adjacent the leading edge and the body adjacent the trailing edge. The one or more guard ribs covers at least a portion of the cutting edge of at least one of the cutting blades.

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Althaus '812 is directed to a razor head in the form of a razor blade unit for a wet-shave razor or a safety razor, the razor blade unit being securable to a front end of a handle. The razor blade unit comprises a plastic body in which two razor blades are disposed, the cutting edges of which extend parallel to one another and are offset one behind the other. The plastic body comprises a base member on which the razor blades are mounted. Projections extend from a forward surface of the base member. Strands of wire are wound around the projections so as to extend over the cutting edges of the razor blades. The strands of wire are critical to achieving a comfortable and safe shave as well as a close and effective shave.

Althaus '774 is also directed to a razor head in the form of a razor blade unit for a wet-shave razor or a safety razor, the razor blade unit being securable to a front end of a handle. The razor head comprises a plastic body, which comprises a base member on which the razor blades are mounted. A spacer is sandwiched between the razor blades. A top cover is placed on the base member, and a front guard bar extends from a forward surface of the base member parallel to the razor blades. The front guard bar and the top cover are both provided with comb-like projections that extend perpendicular to the razor blades and are aligned with each other. The spacer is provided with similar comb-like projections. All of the comb-like projections on the guard bar, the cover, and the spacer have a rounded tip at the ends thereof.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite that one or more of the guard ribs extends from the body adjacent the leading edge to the body adjacent the trailing edge such that the one or more guard ribs is continuous with the body adjacent the leading and trailing edges. Neither Althaus '812 nor Althaus '774 disclose, teach, or suggest guard ribs that extend from the body adjacent the leading edge to the body adjacent the trailing edge such that the guard ribs are continuous with the body, as recited in claim 1. As stated by the Examiner, Althaus '812 does not show guard ribs integrally formed with the body. The comb-like projections of Althaus '774, which Applicant assumes are the guard ribs integrally formed with the body referred to by the Examiner, do not extend from the body adjacent the leading edge to the body adjacent the trailing edge so as to be continuous with the body, as recited in amended claim 1. Accordingly, in both of the Althaus

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references, guard ribs extending from the leading edge to the trailing edge so as to be continuous with the body are not present.

To establish a prima facie case of obviousness for a claimed invention, all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. Because both Althaus references fail to disclose, teach, or suggest what Applicants claim in their amended claim 1, viz., one or more guard ribs extending from the body adjacent the leading edge to the body adjacent the trailing edge such that the one or more guard ribs is continuous with the body adjacent the leading and trailing edges, both Althaus '812 and Althaus '774 individually fail to teach all of the claim recitations of Applicants' invention.

Furthermore, because neither Althaus '812 nor Althaus '774 disclose a guard rib that extends from the body adjacent the leading edge to the body adjacent the trailing edge such that the guard rib is continuous with the body adjacent the leading and trailing edges, the combination of Althaus '812 with Althaus '774 necessarily also fails to disclose such a guard rib as recited in amended claim 1. Consequently, because not all of the claim recitations are taught by the cited references, individually or in combination, Applicants' amended claim 1 is necessarily non-obvious. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claim 1.

Claims 7 and 8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Althaus '812 in view of Althaus '774 and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,167,625 to King et al.

Claims that depend from a claim that is non-obvious are themselves necessarily non-obvious. Because claims 2-12, 14, and 15 depend from claim 1, and because claim 1 is asserted to be non-obvious for the reasons presented above, claims 2-12, 14, and 15 are necessarily non-obvious. Applicants, therefore, respectfully submit that claims 2-12, 14, and 15 are allowable. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of claims 2-12, 14, and 15 be withdrawn.

Applicants believe that the foregoing amendments and remarks are fully responsive to the Office Action and that the claims herein are allowable. In view of the foregoing points that distinguish Applicants' invention from those of the prior art and render Applicants' invention non-obvious, Applicants respectfully request that the

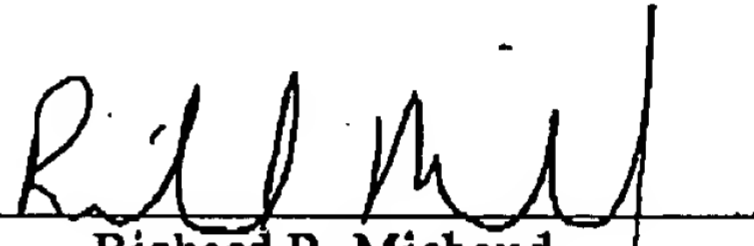
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Examiner reconsider the present application, remove the rejections, and allow the application to issue.

If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference with Applicants' attorneys would be advantageous to the disposition of this case, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned.

Applicants believe that no fees are due with the submission of this Amendment. If any charges are incurred with respect to this Amendment, they may be charged to Deposit Account No. 503342 maintained by Applicants' attorneys.

Respectfully submitted,

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